

EXHIBIT 17
to the Declaration of Jay W Brown

The United States Imposes Sanctions on Russian Financier's Global Sanctions Evasion Network - United States Department of State

Michael R. Pompeo, Secretary of State

Press Statement

July 15, 2020

Today, the United States took action to further limit Yevgeniy Prigozhin's destabilizing global activity by designating entities that have enabled his ability to evade sanctions – this time, in Sudan. These designations include Private Military Company (PMC) Wagner's apparent cover entity in Sudan, M Invest, its subsidiary Meroe Gold, and their leaders, Andrei Mandel and Mikhail Potepkin. Prigozhin's global malign activities are well-documented, as demonstrated by his designation under multiple U.S. sanctions authorities. Prigozhin serves as the financier of the Internet Research Agency (IRA), the Russian troll farm designated by the United States for attempts to interfere in U.S. elections, as well as the PMC Wagner, a U.S. designated Russian Ministry of Defense proxy force expanding Russian influence abroad.

Prigozhin relies on a network of front companies and facilitators, including three companies and an individual designated today based in Hong Kong and Thailand – Shine Dragon Group Limited, Shen Yang Jing Cheng Machinery Imp&Exp. Co, Zhe Jiang Jiayi Small Commodities Trade Company Limited, and Igor Lavrenkov. Between 2018 and 2019, these entities facilitated more than 100 transactions exceeding \$7.5 million that were sent in the interest of Prigozhin.

Throughout the course of this financial activity, Lavrenkov was the director and owner of Shine Dragon Group Limited and also a director at Shen Yang Jing Cheng Machinery Imp&Exp. Co. and Zhe Jiang Jiayi Small Commodities Trade Company Limited.

Prigozhin's role in Sudan highlights the interplay between Russia's paramilitary operations, support for preserving authoritarian regimes, such as that of former Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir, and exploitation of natural resources.

Today's actions will further limit attempts by Prigozhin and his backers to foment disorder or undermine democratic reforms in Sudan.